United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.26

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

First Committee
26th Meeting
Monday, 9 November 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier ..... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The secretariat has circulated informal paper 4, containing a list of the draft resolutions we were to take up this afternoon. Unfortunately, one delegation continues not to wish action to be taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2. Hence, it will be possible for the Committee to take action on only two draft resolutions today.

Seventeen draft resolutions remain to be voted on; I read out the list of these draft resolutions at our last meeting. Five meetings remain for the work of the First Committee, and I appeal to all delegations to reconsider their requests for deferment of voting on draft resolutions.

Today, the Committee will take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.3 and A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which belong to cluster 1, on nuclear weapons.

Before turning to those draft resolutions, I call on representatives wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon): I introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.4/Rev.1 on behalf of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The draft resolution addresses the need to build confidence and prevent conflicts in one of Africa's most volatile regions. Central Africa remains an area of great concern to the international community, as major conflicts still prevail in that subregion.

The Standing Advisory Committee was set up by the Secretary-General at the request of the members of the Economic Community of Central African States; it has emerged as a symbol of partnership between the international community and the States of Central Africa, with those States exercising the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the subregion and the international community, through the General Assembly, providing the necessary expertise and resources.

The present draft resolution reflects the continuing evolution of that partnership towards rendering United Nations support for Central African initiatives more concrete and effective. Elements of the draft resolution take into account the Secretary-General's ground-breaking report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871), which was submitted to the Security Council and to the General Assembly. That report presented a comprehensive assessment of conflicts in Africa and offered prescriptions for their solution. We believe that those recommendations are pertinent to efforts to bring stability to Central Africa.

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee, at their recent meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, endorsed the recommendations of the report and indicated that they considered them relevant to efforts to build peace within and amongst Central African States.

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The present draft resolution also takes into account the measures recently adopted by the Security Council after its comprehensive review of the Secretary-General's report. I have in mind in particular Security Council resolutions 1196 (1998) and 1197 (1998) and the presidential statement of 16 September 1998 (S/PRST/1998/28). In its resolution 1197 (1998), the Council encouraged communication between security-related organs of the United Nations and regional mechanisms, and invited the Secretary-General to develop cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations in Africa, drawing on the United Nations Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa.

Through its presidential statement of 16 September 1998, the Council expressed its agreement with the Secretary-General that the credibility of the United Nations in Africa to a great extent depends upon the willingness of the international community to explore new means of advancing the objectives of peace and security in the African continent.

The Standing Advisory Committee's priorities for the coming year will emphasize the urgency of preventive action to ensure that new conflicts do not erupt in the subregion. To that end, heads of State will meet to set up a high council of Central African States to deal with conflicts in the subregion. The early warning mechanism called for by the heads of State will be set up in Libreville, Gabon, to monitor developments and to prevent new crises from erupting. The General Assembly is already on record as welcoming that mechanism, which has already received the financial support of the OAU and of some Member States. The Government of Gabon, as host, has made important contributions towards providing logistic support for the establishment of the mechanism. We appeal to other Member States to provide support as soon as possible.

The States members of the Standing Advisory Committee have also identified respect for human rights and the promotion of democracy as important measures to prevent the eruption of new conflicts within States. It is for that reason that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs recommended the establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Central Africa, with its headquarters in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Finally, in order to strengthen their capacity to participate in United Nations and regional peacekeeping operations, Central African States have agreed to hold joint military exercises during 1999. While they are prepared to make the necessary effort themselves, logistic and other support is needed from the international community to make this project effective.

Let me end by thanking the Secretary-General and the other members of the Secretariat for the continued, invaluable support given to the Standing Advisory Committee. Member States that have contributed to the Trust Fund are also highly commended.

We request that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.4/Rev.1 be adopted by consensus, as its text is a recurrent one.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa):. On behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, South Africa wishes to introduce the revision to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

Members will notice that the amendments entail the deletion of the first and twelfth preambular paragraphs as contained in document A/C.1/53/L.50. The fourth preambular paragraph has also been amended, and is now reflected in two separate preambular paragraphs. The new third preambular paragraph reads:

> "*Bearing* in mind the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, adopted by consensus at the first special session devoted to disarmament, which included the Declaration, Programme of Action and Machinery for disarmament".

The new fourth preambular paragraph reads:

> "*Bearing in mind also* the objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control".

On the basis of these amendments, it is the hope of the Non-Aligned Movement that the First Committee will be in a position to adopt draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1 without a vote.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): We were given to understand that a delegation had asked for instructions with respect to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, and we hope that by tomorrow India will have received instructions from its capital.

The Chairman: I take it that the representative of Mongolia does not wish to introduce that draft resolution now.

(*spoke in French*)

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

The sponsors would like the draft resolution to be adopted without a vote. As I see no objection from any delegation, and as no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, in spite of what it views as the draft resolution's inherent deficiencies. Israel's joining should therefore not be interpreted as agreement to all its provisions or modalities. Israel joined the consensus chiefly out of its conviction that the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone will eventually serve as an important complement to the overall peace, security and stability of the region.

Israel firmly believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verified nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We would like to see such a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles. We believe such a zone should be established in direct negotiations between States once they recognize each other and establish full and peaceful relations. It cannot be established by anyone other than the parties themselves, nor can it be established between States claiming to be in a state of war and refusing to maintain peaceful relations.

The zone would be directly negotiated and mutually verifiable, achieving on a regional basis the non-proliferation goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As has been well proven in other regions, a step-by-step approach starting with modest confidence-building measures and the gradual forging of a peaceful environment will eventually lead to more ambitious plans such as a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region.

Consensus on this draft resolution has been maintained since 1980 because all the parties concerned have found a way to respect each other's interpretations and reservations regarding the draft resolution. My delegation hopes that this sense of responsibility will prevail in the discussion of other draft resolutions concerning the Middle East.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to make a brief comment on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

We are convinced that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East at an early date is the most viable way to achieve peace and security in the region. This has been Iran's consistent position since 1974, when it initiated what became General Assembly resolution 3263 (XXIX) of 9 December 1974 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

At present the main obstacle to the realization of this initiative is Israel's refusal to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to put its nuclear weapons programme under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is a separate issue and should not become hostage to other matters.

My delegation would have liked to become a sponsor of this draft resolution. Because of the unnecessary references to an unrelated matter in the tenth preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 4, we were regrettably unable to become a sponsor. We nevertheless support wholeheartedly the contents of this draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on the sixth preambular paragraph.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States at the 25th meeting, on 6 November 1998.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which reads as follows:

> "*Recalling* the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 11 May 1995, in which the Conference urged universal adherence to the Treaty as an urgent priority and called upon all States not yet party to the Treaty to accede to it at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities".

Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting on the sixth preambular paragraph?

If not, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the vote on the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:
Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
India, Israel

Abstaining:
Cuba, Pakistan

The sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 was retained by 141 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote after the voting?

I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution as a whole.

I shall first give the floor to those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Becher (Israel): The Committee has before it draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, the only draft resolution to single out a Member State.

This draft resolution, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", deals with an important issue but does not recognize or address the realities in the region.

Many developments have occurred in the nuclear realm in the Middle East in recent years, such as the sombre experience gained by the United Nations Special Commission and the Action Team and other dangerous proliferation efforts taken by some countries in the region. None of these developments involve Israel. On the contrary, Israel has never threatened any of its neighbours, nor has it acted in violation of international law. In fact, Israel has always demonstrated exemplary self-restraint commensurate with the sensitivity of the nuclear domain.

The motives that compel the sponsors of this draft resolution, in the opinion of my delegation, have nothing to do with the alleged specific purpose. This is emphasized by the fact that other draft resolutions concerning crucial issues are presented in a restrained and considerate manner, so as not to single out or offend any single State, whereas when it comes to baseless accusations against Israel, such restraint is nowhere to be found.

If this draft resolution truly addresses itself to the principle of universality, as its proponents cynically claim, it should be broadly applied, and Israel should not be singled out. If, on the other hand, this Committee wishes to highlight the current situation in the Middle East, it should target the real proliferators in the region, which are well known to this Committee and to the international community as a whole.

There is no factual justification for such a draft resolution, nor is there a reason to single out Israel again. It is the policy of Israel to negotiate the establishment, in due time, of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and missiles. A regional nuclear-weapon-free zone should emanate from, and be supported by, all States in the region. Such a zone cannot be imposed on the regional parties. The draft resolution refers to the 1995 document but fails to quote a very relevant phrase from that document, which states that

> "the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security" *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex, decision 2, para. 5)*.

This is a clear and sufficient statement on the subject. The draft resolution before the Committee deviates from these agreed principles and objectives.

There are also compelling practical reasons to oppose this draft resolution. It will certainly not lead to confidence-building and reconciliation, without which further positive developments are impossible. Such a draft will not change the situation prevailing in the region. Moreover, it is bound to be dangerous and counterproductive, because it implies that the regional process can be circumvented by majority resolutions in international bodies. The sponsors of this draft resolution openly admit that their purpose is to harass Israel by trying to coerce it to act on what is essentially a sovereign right and an independent and unilateral decision.

This draft resolution renders a great disservice to the cause of non-proliferation in the Middle East by creating the illusion that it tackles the real issue of proliferation. Unfortunately, the text of this draft resolution also does not reflect the positive developments in the peace process and the changes on the ground. My delegation therefore calls upon all delegations to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Since the inception of this draft resolution, the United States has opposed the text, now entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

We have always considered it inappropriate to single out for criticism one State for its failure to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The United States believes that no matter how much the draft resolution may be softened, it suffers from the defects of its underlying intent and does not deserve the approval of this body.

This year the draft resolution is even more objectionable. In a year when two countries that have tested nuclear weapons are not mentioned by name in a draft resolution that would criticize their actions, how can this body justify criticizing by name another State which has not tested nuclear weapons?

What is more, we have just witnessed the signing of the Wye Memorandum, which we hope will reinvigorate the Middle East peace process. Does a draft resolution like this, especially considering its origins, contribute to the peace process, or will it make that process more difficult? We believe the answer is clear.

In the light of the current situation, we urge other members to consider these arguments carefully and not support this draft resolution. For its part, the United States will vote against.

The Chairman: As no other delegation wishes to explain its position before the vote, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Myanmar, Norway, Singapore

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 as a whole was adopted by 134 votes to 2, with 10 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its vote after the vote?

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba supports draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which we have just adopted, because we believe that it contributes to the Middle East peace efforts. There is no doubt that the proliferation of nuclear weapons, far from reducing existing tensions, would be a major obstacle to achieving lasting peace in this delicate region.

At the same time, my delegation would like it to be known that its vote in favour of the draft resolution in no way changes the position of Cuba regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which we believe to be a discriminatory and selective international system that legitimizes unacceptable privileges for the nuclear-weapon States. That is why my country abstained in the vote on the sixth preambular paragraph.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My country's long-standing views on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are well known. We therefore were obliged to vote against the sixth preambular paragraph, while abstaining on the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2.

Programme of work

The Chairman: To organize consideration of draft resolutions this week, I convened a meeting of the Bureau on Friday afternoon to review the draft resolutions remaining for action. I would like the Committee to take note of the Bureau's feelings in this regard.

The most difficult draft resolution is, of course, A/C.1/53/L.22, "Nuclear testing", to which we have seven amendments. After consultation with other delegations, we would like to consider it on Thursday, 12 November, first thing in the morning. To facilitate the consideration of this draft resolution, a composite paper containing all texts will be prepared by the secretariat for reference use.

I would like also to say a few words on the medium-term plan, which I mentioned last week. I have not yet responded to the request of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, contained in document A/C.1/53/8, for the views of the First Committee on the relevant proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 1998-2001, as I have not yet received any comments to convey to him. He had requested me to respond by last Friday, 6 November.I would like to respond to the request of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee by the end of this week at the latest. If I do not receive comments by then, I will reply to the Fifth Committee Chairman simply that the First Committee has no comments on the revisions made to the medium-term plan.

I would like now to give an idea of what draft resolutions could be considered tomorrow: A/C.1/53/L.12, addressing the Conference on Disarmament report; A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, on transparency; A/C.1/53/L.45, on the International Court of Justice; A/C.1/53/L.49, on bilateral nuclear disarmament; A/C.1/53/L.50, on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; and A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, introduced by Mongolia. The list might change in one way or another by tomorrow. But this gives Committee members an idea of what our plan of action tomorrow could be.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation has noted your proposed programme for tomorrow, Mr. Chairman, and we have no objection to it.

You mentioned that before making your proposal to put A/C.1/53/L.22 and the proposed amendments off until Thursday you had consulted various delegations. Unfortunately, my delegation was perhaps forgotten in the process of your contacts. Since we are perhaps not the most directly interested party, this is quite natural.

I have no objection to the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and its proposed amendments on Thursday. I would merely like to add something to this proposal, which is that we believe it would be convenient for the progress of our work if draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24/Rev.1, on the fissile materials treaty, and draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.11, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), were taken up after consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and the amendments thereto.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation has also noted, Mr. Chairman, that you intend to have a vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 on Thursday. This would be acceptable to us, but I seek clarification. You mentioned that the secretariat would be bringing out a composite paper on the amendments which have been put forward on this draft resolution. We would like to know the status of this composite paper, and why we need it when we have separate amendments which have already been proposed.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): In response to the inquiry of the representative of India, I would like to say that because there are so many amendments to various paragraphs, and additional paragraphs, it seems advisable to have a composite paper — an informal paper — containing all the amendments for easy reference. This would mean that representatives had only one piece of paper with all the amendments in front of them, rather than many different pieces of paper, which would make it very difficult to comprehend how to conduct the sequence of the voting. However, if delegations consider that they can manage it without any difficulty, of course the secretariat will not produce this paper. It is really up to delegations to decide whether this would assist them in the voting.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Perhaps I might add that the purpose is to facilitate the lives of the smallest delegations, which cannot always remain in the room. The paper would change absolutely nothing with respect to the status of existing papers, each of which has an "L" designation.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Again, I would have thought that any decision with regard to procedures would have to be taken by the Committee itself. While I have no problem with the secretariat's trying to help delegations in their work, I would hope that the same kind of treatment is meted out to every draft resolution on which there are amendments. Why is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 receiving such special treatment? Is it because there are seven amendments to it? Well, we can put forward seven amendments to other draft resolutions, too.

I do not think that we should adopt unilaterally a procedure for any draft resolution that is different, until and unless the concurrence of the Committee has been obtained. I would suggest that this principle should be followed, because otherwise we shall get into discriminatory practices, which we hope we shall be able to correct during the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I strongly support the procedure you have suggested, Mr. Chairman, which, by the way, is often used in other Committees. It makes the work easier, and has nothing to do with procedural affairs or the substance, since the Chairman states, as you have done, that it does not change the status of the document. Moreover, in my view, it is not in the interests of the sponsors of amendments themselves for us to have seven, 700 or 7,000 amendments in various different documents, because then we shall be lost, and we may easily make mistakes. In my opinion, it is in the interests of the sponsors to get a favourable vote on their amendments, and, from that perspective, the fact of having a consolidated paper from the Chair will obviously promote the content of the amendments. And we are talking about achieving resolutions whose content reflects clear support, not momentary confusion.

Now, if we want to embark on procedural mechanisms, we can do that, too. But let us then take a clear political decision. We can choose the option whereby we submit amendments and certain delegations do not have the chance to examine them. As you very aptly said, Mr. Chairman, there are smaller delegations from developing countries that have fewer resources, fewer means, and that do not have representatives in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Their only chance to participate in the global disarmament process is in the First Committee. If there is the will to give them a chance to participate, fine; then let us have the consolidated paper you suggested. But if, on the contrary, we are trying to restrict this activity to an "exclusive" group of connoisseurs on this topic, well, then, that is a different option.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I do not think anyone in this room is surprised that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 will be among the more difficult ones for the First Committee this year. That is why I am rather disappointed that we are getting into what I consider to be an unnecessary procedural debate at this point.

There are three points I would like to make. First, if an apology is due to you, Mr. Chairman, for the reference to Thursday as the date for the draft resolution to be acted upon, I give you that apology. I had consulted with the key delegations. I thought there was an understanding that we could go forward on Thursday, and I communicated that to you. My understanding is that there is an agreement that it will be acted upon on Thursday.

Secondly, with regard to the amendments, I would suggest that this question is very easily dealt with. If the proposers of the amendments agree with the secretariat's idea, it can be done. If they do not agree, it is not done: end of debate.

The idea was not that of Canada or any other sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. I want that on the record. I think that the implementation of that rests entirely with those who are in control of the original documents. Period.

On the third point, since reference was made to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24/Rev.1 on fissile material, it is my understanding that a number of key delegations have agreed that it should go forward on Friday, and Canada, as one of those delegations, certainly confirms that agreement. I do not think we need to get into a long, sterile procedural debate here this afternoon.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is not my delegation's intention, either, to enter into a procedural discussion. I just want, first of all, to clarify that the understanding that I gathered from your statement, Sir, was that the Chair had conducted the consultations, not that Canada had conducted the consultations on behalf of the Chair. In that case, I would have said "Yes, I was consulted". I had no problem with Thursday, but it was my understanding from your statement, Sir, that the Chair had conducted consultations, in which case I was not consulted. That is the only point I wanted to make. Yes, Pakistan thought that it might be consulted or that it should be consulted.

Secondly, with regard to the amendments, it is not that we believe that this is a Canadian idea. Canada sometimes has good ideas, but the point at issue is the following. There are seven separate amendments emanating from different sources. Each is contained in a separate document. Each has a different import. We do not wish these amendments to be confused or considered as a whole. They are separate amendments, some with greater support, some with lesser. We understand that, and therefore, in accordance with the rules, action on these has to be taken separately. That is the only point. If the secretariat's paper confuses or prejudices that point, we would object to the paper. If it does not, we have no problem with the paper.

Let me also add that it is also possible that, in addition to those seven amendments which are in documents, there will be additional amendments emanating from the floor, in which case I hope that we will be able to follow everything that is on paper and not on paper. With that, I would have no difficulty if that is the understanding on which we are proceeding.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I appreciate this opportunity to explain the status of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.5, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

Following consultations among interested delegations, we asked for the postponement of the consideration of the draft resolution a few days ago. At this point, I just want to clarify that our consultations are almost over and it seems to me that we will be able to submit draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1 this afternoon to the secretariat. In that case, we would like to have the document circulated tomorrow and perhaps action might be taken on the draft resolution tomorrow. That is our understanding.

The Chairman: There are possible financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.5. We therefore have to wait until we have clarification on that point before we make a decision on that draft resolution. It is not only that there may be no further objections to considering it; we cannot act on it before we have a financial implications report.

(*spoke in French*)

I now wish to return to the matter of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. I would put a very simple question, pointing out once again that the single paper under discussion is designed simply to make things easier for the smaller delegations. It has no impact on procedural matters or on the substance.

Is there any formal objection to the preparation and distribution by the secretariat of such a paper? If there is any such objection, we will abandon the idea.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I thought I had stated my position quite clearly. On the basis of the understanding that it has no impact on the separate status of each of the documents, we would have no objection to the paper.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That being the case, the secretariat shall proceed to preparing the paper, which will be circulated tomorrow.

I appeal once again to delegations to reflect on the request to defer voting on draft resolutions. I wish to remind them that we have only four more meetings at which to vote on 15 draft resolutions, some of which are extremely difficult. We will have no opportunity for an extra meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.